

THE FACE OF ROSENTEL.

CHAPTER V. THE BURNED PAPER.

For once the stoical Lamar lost his composure.

"For God's sake, how did it happen?"

In a hollow voice Maxey made the reply.

"They were alone."

The physician was speechless. Maxey thought him horrified. On the contrary, he was amazed.

When he found his voice again, there was but a single word in his vocabulary equal to the situation, and he uttered it:

"Impossible!"

Maxey did not heed him, but went on in a hopeless tone:

"It was my fault, of course, entirely my fault. I allowed myself to be led by her girlish whim when I ought to have looked the matter squarely in the face and asserted my own will. I ought to have taken your advice, Lamar. You knew it—you foretold it all. You warned!"

Dr. Lamar interrupted him.

"Not of any such occurrence as this, Maxey. Never. Do you mean to tell me that you think the patient frightened that handkerchief around your sister's throat?"

"I tell you," said Maxey, "I left them alone—absolutely alone. When I came back the door was locked."

"On the inside?"

"On the inside."

Lamar swept a bewildered glance about the apartment, stared at the pale face on the bed in the alcove room, at the swollen features behind the torn drapery, at the professionally anxious visage of the nurse, who was moving about between the two. He looked at the doors, at the windows, at the chimney place. He stepped from the corner where he had been talking with Maxey to the center table and began very carefully to pat his surgical instruments back into the case from which he had lately removed them. When he had completed this task, he closed the box with a sudden snap, and turning to the artist with the positive energy of a man who has thoroughly made up his mind said:

"Maxey, you are crazy!"

His emphatic manner roused the young man from his stupor. From the moment when he heard the key fall from its place on the inside of the door as he tried to open it everything had seemed to him like the illogical, haphazard happenings of a dream. If he had acted with promptness and vigor in the emergency, he had done so mechanically, in a sort of instinctive fashion, without reflection. After assistance had arrived and the immediate excitement was over he went about in a daze. The physician's sharp tone made him start. He lifted his eyes from the floor, unclasped his hands, which had been folded behind his back, and passed his palm over his throbbing forehead.

"I believe you are more than half right," he murmured. "The blow was so sudden and unexpected that it crushed me. Lamar, you have always been the best of friends. We were boys together. I know you wouldn't deceive me about a matter of this kind. Tell me the truth at once. You have grave fears for Ellen?"

"No, I haven't," returned Lamar quickly. "I have no fears at all. She will be herself again with proper care in three days. Don't imagine from that there has been no danger. It was a terribly narrow escape, a terribly narrow escape."

"Escape from what, from whom? You said just now that I was crazy, Lamar, because I gave utterance to what seemed to me the only possible suspicion a man could entertain. I come home, find them alone, and I infer that the poor, irresponsible creature had indeed fulfilled your prediction and brought terrible trouble upon us. And now you say—"

"Impossible," the physician interposed positively.

"Annoyed did not do it?"

"Annoyed could not have done it."

Maxey seemed electrified. He glanced around the room with an air of suspicion and excitement. Then with characteristic impulsiveness he seized his hat and coat.

Lamar, who had been watching him with a look of grave concern in his handsome features, laid his hand gently on his shoulder.

"What are you going to do?"

"Do I am going to the police. I am going to have this matter investigated at once. I—"

He stopped short, amazed by the expression which he saw in the physician's face.

"No, Julian Maxey, not if I can prevent it."

The serious, earnest gravity, the utter solemnity of Dr. Lamar's speech and manner, frightened the artist.

"What is it, Lamar? For heaven's sake, what are you thinking about?"

"I cannot tell you here. Let me see you in private."

A nervous trembling took Maxey all at once. He did not know why. He led the way to the front of the house. There was a dim light in the parlor. Maxey did not turn it up. He sat down close beside the physician on a sofa. Lamar did not seem to see his way clearly to what he wanted to say, and after a moment's silence Maxey spoke up excitedly:

"There's something on your mind, Lamar. I know it. There is something which you know and I don't know, so serious that you hesitate to tell me of it."

"No," said Lamar gravely. "I know nothing which you do not know—much less, in fact, than you ought to know. I only desire that you shall step to think before you act. You have not told me everything."

"Good heavens, how am I to tell you everything? We must question Ellen."

"I had rather not question Ellen."

"My dear boy," said the physician in a low and not wholly steady voice, "are you sure your sister has been entirely happy?"

"I am quite sure she has not!" cried Maxey impetuously.

into the outer hall, except by the door which led from the little vestibule belonging to the suit, a passageway extending the width of Miss Maxey's sleeping chamber and connecting the large rear room with the back parlor. Maxey naturally saw no objection to his theory so far. Out of this private hall were three doors besides the outer door—one opening at one end into the sitting room, another at the other extremity into the rear parlor, and the third at the back into Miss Maxey's chamber. It would have been easy for the intruder, with this ample provision for his purpose, to have occupied observation until a suitable opportunity presented for his safe escape from the suit.

Maxey began his search of the premises by looking under a sofa and behind a bookcase. From this thorough beginning he went on in a most careful and methodical manner, peeping into closets, opening drawers to ascertain whether their contents had been disturbed, and leaving no spot unvisited, the position of no carelessly thrown aside article unexplained. The search was fruitless. Not an atom of evidence to substantiate the theory advanced by Maxey could be discovered. Both men were disappointed and thoughtful when the tour of investigation was finished.

They stood at last before the grate in the room, with the nurse and the two sufferers, warming their hands. Once in awhile Maxey's troubled gaze sought Dr. Lamar's face, but the physician's glance was downward and his brow contracted.

Lamar tapped his foot moodily against the fender and seemed wrapped in a brown study. Maxey longed for some word of encouragement or comfort from his friend, the physician. He had the greatest confidence in Dr. Lamar's carefully considered opinions, but this time the physician did not seem to have any opinion to offer.

Suddenly Lamar's attention was caught by an object lying on the hearthstone. He stooped and picked it up.

"Have you been burning paper, Maxey?"

"No," returned Maxey quickly. "I have not."

"What is that?"

Maxey took from his hand the corner of a newspaper with a charred edge. He scrutinized it suspiciously. Ordinarily he would have thrown such an object aside contemptuously. In the present emergency he would have examined a pin if Lamar had handed it to him.

"Have you burned any paper in this grate, Mrs. Davis?" asked Maxey of the nurse. "Think before you speak. It may be a very important matter."

"I have not had any paper in my hand since I have been here. That's easily settled."

"There has been a very large piece of paper burned here," said Lamar in a whisper. "See there, and there! The black ashes are all about."

The physician stamped his foot near the grate, and the little breath of air caused by the concussion made a rustle of light burned paper on the floor.

"It is the newspaper containing the story of our finding Annette!" exclaimed the artist, with growing suspicion, "a

paper which I was very anxious to keep, and which Ellen was quite as particular about. I left it here on the table. What do you make of it, Lamar? What would you do?"

"I confess I am in the dark. But I am very certain you want to save that scrap of paper and to keep the event in mind. If not now, the day may come when it will supply a most important evidence. As for now, I would suggest that you question the people in the house."

Maxey proceeded at once to act upon the suggestion. The physician, after stopping a moment to examine his patient, put on his hat and followed him. The occupants of the floor below had heard nothing and seen nothing, but Maxey persisted with the determination of despair. He found the janitor at the foot of the stairs.

"My good man," he said to him, "do you recall seeing me go out with my friend, the doctor, here, just after dark?"

"I do, sir, very well, sir."

"It is very important that you should not give a hasty answer to the question I am going to ask you—very important, for a failure in your recollection may get us all into trouble."

"I hope, Mr. Maxey, there is nothing serious in the matter."

"Your hopes are vain then. There is something very serious in the matter. Did you see anybody about the hall after my departure?"

"No, sir."

"You are sure?"

"I am, because, you see, I was going down cellar at the time to look after the furnaces, and I staid below there for an hour. No, sir. I am sorry I can't help you, but I haven't seen anybody. That's the fact of it, sir. I'd have remembered it if I had. I don't forget easy, even little trifles like that. Now, there was a friend of yours here this morning asking after you, and I could repeat the whole circumstances."

"Repeat them, please," said Maxey quickly.

"The man came here to the foot of the stairs. 'It's too much trouble to go up,' he said, 'but have you seen my friend Mr. Maxey today?' I have, I said. 'How is he looking?' was his next question. 'Looking fine, sir,' says I. 'And that invalid of his, that girl they found on the rocks, how is she coming on?'"

"At this point the janitor's face became troubled, and he looked a little confused."

"Well," said Maxey, "that's very important. What was your answer. Tell us exactly."

"Maybe I told him more than I had any right to tell, but the fact is, sir, I was in a hurry and wanted to be rid of him. Says I, 'Oh, she's all right.' 'All right?' he says. 'What do you mean?' 'I

mean they're doctoring her up,' I says, 'and they'll soon have her out of it.' I thought he looked somewhat astonished, and I said to him, 'If you want to know any particulars, you'd better go right up and see the gentleman himself, sir,' I said. 'Some other time,' he remarked and turned square around and walked out."

Maxey and Lamar looked at each other. There was an interrogation in both glances.

"Did you ever see this lazy friend of mine before?" questioned Maxey.

"Only once, sir. That's how I know when I saw him he was a friend of yours. He came day before yesterday and asked me the same questions."

"And wouldn't go up?"

"He was averse to climbing, sir."

"Can you describe him?"

"Well, he was a man, I should say, about 40, with small eyes, near together, bushy eyebrows, smooth face and a hook nose. He wore a handsome pin in his shirt front. I don't know as I can say much more definite."

"This means something," cried Maxey, with a touch of his former excitement as they remounted the stairs.

"And to think that our hands are tied! If only I might ask Ellen two little questions."

Lamar made no reply to this, but as soon as he reached the room he went to the bedside, felt the patient's pulse and exchanged a few words with the nurse.

Ellen lay with her face swollen, her throat well bandaged, breathing with great pain and difficulty. The physician turned from an earnest scrutiny of her face to the artist. The emergency seemed so grave to him that he resolved to permit a matter which ordinarily he would have been too cautious to countenance.

"You may ask her just one question."

Maxey threw himself on a knee beside the bed and put back the hair from his sister's forehead with a tremulous hand.

"Ellen! Ellen!" he murmured.

A slight motion of the head indicated that she heard him.

"Don't try to turn your head, dear. Don't exert yourself to answer me, but tell me, if you can, who did it?"

The head nodded slightly in the negative, and the lips made an unsuccessful attempt to frame an answer.

"Think, Ellen! Did you turn the key in the door?"

Again the negative motion of the head. Again the lips moved. Maxey put his ear close down and caught the painfully whispered words:

"I don't know—I was asleep—I heard Annette cry—and then—I felt myself—grow faint!"

"There, there!" cried Maxey, starting up. "You have told me enough, dear. Don't try to talk any more. Lamar, I tell you there is something wrong here. This must be placed in the hands of the police. Unless my instinct deceives me this dastardly attack on my poor sister is intimately connected with the matter that kept us waiting that cold night on the sea road."

Maxey had passed from the bedside and drew Lamar into a corner near the window, a window that looked out over the dark, lonesome river. The black tide flowed on silently beneath the thickening ice. A chill gust of wind from the sea passed the house with a rush. The windows rattled ominously in the sash.

The artist started.

"How searching the wind is tonight! Ah, here is the mischief! The sash is not shut tightly at the bottom."

Abstractedly he closed and locked the window and came away.

"Yes, yes," he muttered. "It is better to go to the police at once."

Not to the police, good Maxey, not to the tardy officers of a human justice—not in that direction lies the thing of which you are in search, but down there—down there where the lonesome river flows silently beneath the thickening ice and all is cold and dark.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

TREATMENT OF THE HANDS.

How Red, Rough Hands May Be Rendered White, Supple and Soft.

The best known treatment will avail but little unless the dissatisfied owner of a pair of ugly hands is determined to persist in whatever set of remedies she may decide upon. Tenderly cooing the hands today and tomorrow abusing them is going to bring severe disappointment to the woman who is making a half hearted effort to secure a pair of pretty hands.

The very first move you make should be in the direction of your soap dish. Buy old white castile soap of a trustworthy firm. If old and pure, it will be very dry and light in weight. Avoid as much as possible keeping the hands in either very cold or very hot water. The very best plan is to give the hands a thorough cleansing in warm water pleasant to the touch, using almond meal or bran. Tie up either one of these in a little cheesecloth bag and, see how nicely it will take the place of soap as an occasional substitute.

Before your hands are dry pour into the palms some softening lotion. Golden Days suggests the following: It is made of one-third glycerin, two-thirds rosewater and a sprinkle of powdered borax. This must be rubbed into the hands thoroughly, and when they have been dried on a soft towel and dusted with some delicate rice powder or the dry bran you should see that they do not get another scrub for many hours.

All rough work and work that exposes the hands to dust and grime must be done with the hands gloved. There are rubber gloves made for this purpose, and with these gloves a lady may become her own charwoman without hurting her hands.

Never use anything but soft water. If water is hard, it must be softened by dropping in a few grains of borax, a little ammonia or a small quantity of soda. All these things are drying, and after using any one of them the hands should be anointed with an unguent of some kind. Almond oil is good.

Excessive redness is sometimes caused by a squeezing process, resulting from tight articles of wearing apparel. The snugly drawn corset or the glove that is a half size too small will cause a deal of mischief. Circulation should be free.

A Plant That Jumps When It Is Hot.

A very queer plant belongs to the pea family, and is called the "moving plant," on account of the manner in which its leaves turn around of their own accord or by jerks, without being touched or in any way disturbed. Sometimes only one or two leaves on a plant will be affected; at other times they will all perform jumps and gyrations simultaneously. It is observed that the movements are most energetic when the thermometer marks about 80 degs.—Washington Star.

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